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# CONTENTS.





2  
A

# SERMON

DELIVERED AT THE ORDINATION

OF

THE REV. JACOB IDE,

AT MEDWAY,

NOV. 2, 1814.

BY LEONARD WOODS, D.D.

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## S E R M O N.

2 TIM. ii. 24, 25.

*The servant of the Lord must not strive ; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient ; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.*

I MIGHT easily select a part of the ministerial character more important in the general estimation, than what is here presented. I might descant on virtues, which are deemed more sublime, and on duties more splendid, and more attractive of popular applause. But nothing can be named, in which a gospel minister more manifestly bears the resemblance of *Christ*, than *the spirit of meekness and gentleness*. As this spirit is to pervade all his affections and all his conduct, it is of extensive and constant utility. But my principal reason for introducing this subject is, that it has been treated less frequently, than most other subjects which pertain to the pastoral office, and as I have thought, less frequently than its nature demands.

The simple point to which I shall direct your attention in the following discourse, is, *the peculiar importance of MEEKNESS and GENTLENESS in a minister of the gospel.*

In order to illustrate this point, I observe, in the *first* place, that *the spirit of christian meekness and gentleness*

*is necessary to qualify a minister for the various duties of his office.*

It is necessary to prepare him for *the study of the Holy Scriptures*. This is suggested by an Apostle ; “ Wherefore lay aside all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive *with meekness* the ingrafted word.” The predominance of those sinful passions, which are contrary to meekness, totally disqualifies a minister for reading and meditation. It blinds the eyes of his understanding, gives a wrong bias to his judgment, and exposes him to every kind of error. What confidence can his people have in the conclusions to which he is conducted, while under the influence of pride, anger, or any disorderly affection ? But under the influence of *meekness*, he is prepared for *profitable study*. He is sensible of the limitations of his mind, and the necessity of being taught of the Spirit. He earnestly desires to be guided into the truth, and is ready to submit unreservedly to the infallible word of God. All his prepossessions,—all the results of unsanctified reason he is willing to yield, and to believe every revealed truth on the authority of inspiration. With a docile temper, kneeling before God, he says, “ Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.” His faith receives every doctrine of the Bible, because God, who cannot lie, has declared it. Time spent by a minister in search of divine truth with such a disposition, will not be spent in vain. The God of truth will be his teacher. “ The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way.”

Meekness and gentleness are absolutely necessary to

prepare a minister to teach the CHRISTIAN RELIGION and perform other pastoral duties, with propriety, acceptance, and success.

The *christian* religion is a religion of *love*. It breathes peace on earth, and good will to men. A minister, who possesses the virtues recommended in the text, imbibes the spirit of this religion, and is prepared to teach its doctrines and duties with *propriety*. But how can a man preach the *gospel*, without a meek and gentle spirit? With what propriety can he exhort others “to put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another,” while it is obvious that, in all these lovely graces, *he* is wanting? What incongruity, in his calling upon others to embrace a religion, which inculcates the temper of the *lamb*, while he himself shows the temper of the *tiger*? Without a mild, affectionate disposition, whatever else he may possess, he is obviously unqualified for preaching the *gospel of peace*. There is a total repugnancy between his office and his character. His disqualification is radical, and cannot be compensated by any literary attainment, by any stock of theological knowledge, nor by any decency or refinement of manners.

Meekness and gentleness are necessary to a preacher’s acceptance. I mean not to suggest, that the most amiable, attractive manner of exhibiting the truth would reconcile the unsanctified heart to it, or cause the offence of the cross to cease. But the preacher, who complies with the apostle’s direction now before us, has nothing offensive in his *manner*; and any opposition made against



him is excited purely by *the holy nature of the truth itself*, and not by any thing exceptionable in *him*, as a preacher. He will indeed love the truth, and earnestly contend for it. Nor will he be deterred, by fear of man, or love of popularity, from preaching any doctrine or duty taught in the scriptures. He supports the truth by the strongest arguments, and exposes the inconsistency and turpitude of error in the clearest manner possible. But in the defence of the truth he is careful never to enlist his angry passions. His tongue is never heard to utter *invectives* against others, however they may differ in opinion. Nor is he transported to undue severities, either of language or feeling, against those, who load him with the greatest reproaches and injuries. The only methods, which he employs to bring men to the knowledge of the truth, are those which are dictated by reason, by compassion, by gentleness. Let a minister preach thus, and his enemies will be at peace with him. At least they will be in the condition of those enemies of the prophet Daniel, who, with all the vigilance of malice and revenge, could *find no occasion against him, except concerning the law of his God*.

Meekness and gentleness are *peculiarly* important to a preacher's success. "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." Acrimonious feelings and expressions are not the instruments, by which the cause of righteousness is to be promoted. A minister is indeed engaged in a *warfare*; and he must *contend and fight* in order to his success. But what is the *nature* of this warfare? What is this contention, but a contention against the disorderly affections of human nature? Now with



what weapons will you carry on such a warfare as this? Is a minister to use anger and violence, to subdue anger and violence in others? Mahometan weapons have indeed been successful in promoting the Mahometan religion. But have they ever promoted the cause of CHRIST? All the doctrines of the Bible, it is agreed, are to be taught. The question is, *in what manner?* The apostle answers; and in his answer tells us, in the name of God, how we can most successfully preach the gospel. “The servant of the Lord must not *strive*, but be *gentle* unto *all* men, apt to teach, *patient*, in *meekness* instructing those that oppose themselves.” A minister, who follows this direction, has the brightest prospect of success. Truth, addressed to men in this manner, is most likely to gain their impartial attention, to satisfy their reason, and to find its way to their hearts. Every one must perceive, that this manner of teaching corresponds with the nature of divine truth. The incomprehensible greatness and perfect holiness of the subjects of the christian revelation require, that they should be treated with sacred composure and gentleness of mind. The least mixture of passion is inadmissible. Will you treat the holy and benevolent God, the condescending and merciful Redeemer, and the Spirit of all grace, as the worshippers of Baal treated their dead idol? Can you excite *love* by the language of *ill will*? Can you attract men to a heaven of peace, by displaying a spirit of strife?—to a heaven of kindness, by a spirit of virulence? Can you successfully inculcate condescension, forgiveness, and compassion, by displaying pride, revenge, and hardness of heart? Can we per-

suade our hearers to govern *their* passions, by showing them that we do not govern our *own*?

A minister of the gospel is taught from above. He receives his doctrines, not from man, but from God. These instructions of God, he ought to receive with a meek and lowly disposition. With the same disposition he ought to teach them. Otherwise it will not appear, that he is teaching truths, which came from God. For who can suppose, that truths, coming directly from the Most High God, will be received and communicated by his minister with any other, than a meek and gentle spirit? If an assembly see the christian revelation handled with violence,—what good can be done? Of what use will it be for them to be made to shake by the tremendous force of the preacher's voice, while they feel no humble reverence for the holiness and authority of Jehovah? Whatever effect may be produced by a spirit of acrimony and violence in a preacher, it is not the success which the gospel aims at. The success of a minister consists in conforming the hearts and lives of men to the character of Christ, and fitting them for the heavenly inheritance. His usefulness is to be measured by the degree, in which he promotes true religion. But if he is destitute of meekness, what reason is there to expect he will promote religion? He may have burning zeal, and do much seemingly for the conversion of sinners. But who will reward us for converting men from *stupidity* to *animosity*?—for rousing them from *sleep* to *bite* and *devour*? A minister of a rough and violent spirit may build up his church; but the members composing it will, in all

probability, be stamped with his likeness. You will see them *unkind, wrathful, contentious*. Even real Christians, in this case, are formed under such a pernicious influence, that their religion will be wretchedly debased by heterogeneous mixtures. Reposing confidence in their teacher, they consider not only his *doctrines*, but whatever appears in his *disposition* and *manners*, as authorized by his religion. Thus the deformity of *their* character is, in a measure, attributable to the wrong spirit of their *minister*.

I have now touched upon a very interesting point. To be useful, a minister must be exemplary. The example of one, who possesses a right temper, is of mighty efficacy in forming the minds of Christians. They look to him as a pattern, and receive their particular cast of character from what they see in *him*. His sweet and lovely spirit diffuses itself among the followers of Christ, and promotes love, joy, and peace. His example makes an impression on all beholders. It manifestly rises above the best attainments of human nature. It shows the power of God, and is a distinguished honor to his infinite grace.

But a minister has other duties to perform. He must visit from house to house ; and converse with his people in private. He must seek access to them at all times, and administer counsel, reproof, and consolation, as their circumstances require. In the performance of all these duties, the disposition, which I have been recommending, is unspeakably important. It will allure his people to attend to his instructions. As he assumes no airs of haughty superiority, and teaches as though he taught them

not ; as he governs his own passions, and is always patient and kind ; they will freely disclose to him all their difficulties, and, with a candid, teachable temper, ask his counsel. They will ever be disposed to acknowledge their obligations, and to give him higher honor than he claims. The gentleness of his disposition renders even his *reproofs acceptable*. Think you, that a minister has been faithful, when he has barely told a man his fault ? With what *temper* has he done it ? If you regard his success, this is a question of great importance. Who among human beings can take offence ; whose heart is hard enough not to be affected, when a minister of the gospel goes to him, and, with voice and looks full of tenderness, honestly tells him what he has done amiss, and announces to him, not the resentment of a *man*, but the displeasure of *God* ?

A minister, adorned with a meek and quiet spirit, may be extensively useful in composing disagreements and preventing strife. This is the man to heal wounds, to calm commotions, and extinguish fires. But what can one of an opposite temper do ? Can wounds be healed with his scourge ? Can his blustering quell a rising storm ? Will you send a firebrand to put out a flame ?

But do not mistake me. I mean not to exalt meekness at the expense of other virtues. In fact, it is not at variance with them, and never would have been thought so, had not the nature of the one or the other been misunderstood. Meekness is not only *compatible* with other virtues, but is their *support* and *ornament*. On this foundation rests all true *decision* of character. Where meekness is wanting, you may easily find the stiffness of a bigot, and the surli-



ness of a cynic ; but the decision of a *man* and a *Christian* you cannot find. The apostle Paul was distinguished for meekness. He was as gentle, as a tender mother towards her children. No man ever had more pliability, than he, who became *all things to all men*. His passions were under such control, that no reproach or suffering could ruffle them. And yet, where will you look for such *firmness*? In Jesus, the Captain of our salvation, this combination of virtues was perfect. Meekness and gentleness were diffused through all his words and actions. And yet his firmness was immovable.

The same consistency appears between *meekness* and *zeal*. Meekness tempers the ardor of zeal, but never extinguishes it. Nor does meekness in the least diminish the *influence* of zeal ; but, on the contrary, by directing its operations, and preventing its irregularities, gives it the highest possible efficacy.

Meekness is a powerful aid to ministerial *fidelity*. Harshness of temper throws a thousand obstacles in a minister's way. It involves him in endless difficulties. It creates enemies. It exposes him to perpetual war, and arms the very elements against him. From these difficulties a minister is preserved by the spirit of meekness and gentleness. This diminishes the number and hostility of his opposers. It clears his way of obstacles ; and renders his duty practicable and easy. No minister is so likely to preach the truths of revelation with persevering fidelity, as he who preaches them in the *spirit of love and meekness*. This will make him bold to declare all the counsel of God and to reprove wickedness, when violent

men are, by want of influence, compelled to a timid silence. A minister, who is governed by meekness, and has the quiet possession of his own mind, is unmoved by dangers, at which turbulent spirits tremble. He calmly bears reproaches and encounters trials, by which they are disheartened, and sunk. This leads me,

In the *second* place, to illustrate the importance of christian meekness by its *happy effects on a minister's situation and enjoyments*. Although it is sometimes considered a very feeble, inactive virtue ; it does, in fact, impart to a minister who possesses it, the highest degree of energy, and afford him absolute security against the power of his enemies. Let them be ever so numerous, and their wrath and subtilty ever so great ; the victory will be his. But be it remembered, that his victory is not obtained by worldly weapons. It comes neither by force, nor by terror. It is the victory of *wisdom over folly*, of *sober reason over passion*, of *religion over impiety*. This honor belongs to every minister, who follows the meek and lowly Jesus. By governing his own spirit ; by returning good for evil, and blessing for cursing ; by treating his opposers with moderation and kindness, he discovers a greatness of mind, which often melts or confounds them, and is always noticed with esteem by impartial spectators. Besides this, he obtains a victory, which the world seldom beholds, but which the wise man esteems above all others—*victory over himself*.

“ His warfare is within. There unfatigued,

“ His fervent spirit labors. There he fights,

“ And there obtains fresh triumphs o’er himself,

“And never withering wreathes, compared to which,  
 “The laurels that a Cæsar reaps are weeds.”

Meekness preserves a minister from the unhappiness of *contention*. Whatever others do, *he* will not strive. He will not participate in the disturbance of the world around him. He is often like a man, who from his own safe retreat, beholds or hears at a distance the tumult of battle. While others are suffering the wretchedness of envying and strife ; he enjoys the pleasure of a serene and peaceful mind. And he enjoys the additional pleasure of seeing serenity and joy diffused among all around him.

The value of such a temper it is impossible to describe. The world is full of disorder ; and no man is exposed to see more of it, or to be more affected by it, than a minister of the gospel. He *must* have trials. How delightful soever his prospect at the beginning, difficulty lies before him. The day may open with a clear sky ; but dark and stormy clouds will appear before night. If a minister faithfully preach the religion of Christ, and live accordingly, he must encounter opposition in some form or other. He cannot escape. But amidst all his troubles, the spirit of meekness enables him to keep peace within. Others are agitated ; but he is composed. Others, stimulated by the malevolence of their hearts, may load him and his doctrine with ignominy. But *he* is gentle and patient. The tranquillity of his mind is ruffled by no irregular passion. No resentful or envious thought corrodes his heart. No anger, sullenness, or discontent lies festering there. The sweetness and lenity of his disposition forever preserve him from pains and tortures like

these, and secure to him an inward serenity, which no wind or tempest can destroy. My brethren, the earth cannot offer a blessing comparable to this.

Finally, consider the importance of the virtue enjoined in my text, as *it is in a special manner necessary to assimilate ministers to the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls*. He is their standard. They can aim at no higher point of excellence, than imitation of his character. Fix your eyes then, steadily upon your Lord and Master.—He was meek and lowly in heart. The spirit of the dove pervaded his whole character and life. He indeed exhibited the emotion of *anger*; but his anger was under perfect control, and never had the least mixture of bitterness, or revenge.\* It was holy displeasure against sin, springing from a pure and benevolent heart. Attentively survey his whole conduct. See the lovely meekness he showed on every trying occasion. He never in a single instance uttered a harsh expression against any of his opposers; but used calm reasoning and friendly expostulation. He employed no violent methods to refute their false charges; but endeavored by soft answers to convince and reform them. When the Jews accused him of blasphemy because he pardoned a paralytic; how gentle and convincing was his reply! When the Pharisees reproached him with undue familiarity with sinners, because he ate and conversed with them; he reminded them of the design of his advent, and how much those poor sinners needed his instruction and grace. When,

\* NOTE. For several thoughts and modes of expression the writer of this sermon is indebted to a discourse of Dr. Evans on meekness.



upon his healing a demoniac, they maliciously accused him of a confederacy with the devil ; he attempted, with perfect mildness, though with great force of argument, to show them the absurdity of such a cavil, and solemnly warned them of the guilt and danger of their conduct. When, on another occasion, some of his hearers were so enraged at his faithful preaching, that they took up stones to stone him ; in the most gentle, most affecting manner he said to them ; “ Many good works have I showed you from my Father ; for which of those works do ye stone me ? ”—Near the close of his ministry his trials were still greater, and his meekness and gentleness still more remarkably displayed. When Judas came out with his band of ruffians, to betray him into the hands of the rulers ; Jesus treated him,—he treated even *Judas* with the most amiable lenity.—“ Friend, wherefore art thou come ? Betrayest thou the son of man with a kiss ? ” No words can set forth his meekness, when he stood before the unrighteous rulers. He was abused, insulted, reproached, tortured, and condemned. But the Lamb of God, though possessed of power to crush his enemies in a moment, bore it all with silent patience ! When they finished the work of malice and cruelty, and nailed him to the cross ; no emotion of illwill was excited in his breast ; but with indescribable mildness and tenderness he said, “ Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

My dear brother, *behold your pattern !* See the lovely virtue, which ought to beautify your character, and to pervade your studies, your preaching, and your pastoral

labors. The God of all grace has, I trust, brought you to the feet of Jesus, and made you partaker of his spirit. Carefully cherish that spirit. It will prepare you for every duty. It will give you quietness of mind under every affliction. It will render your preaching and visits useful to your people, and your company pleasing and profitable to your brethren in the ministry. Let it be your care to grow in the meekness of wisdom ; and make all your trials and sufferings subservient to this end. Banish forever that proud, irritable temper, which rises against a faithful reprove ; and always consider *him* your best friend, who most plainly points out your failings."—Guard, my dear brother, against impatience under reproaches. Complain not of injuries. Undergo every hardship for the good of your beloved charge. Care not what you suffer, if you may but secure their salvation. How often soever your kindest efforts are repelled with coldness, return to your work with increasing ardor.—If at any time your feelings are disturbed,—if any tumultuous passion begins to predominate,—if any trouble oppress you, or the magnitude of your duty discourage you ; *look unto Jesus*. To whom else can you go ? Where is a friend, a guide, a teacher like him ? You can find no other perfect example. You can aim at no mark so high, as conformity to him. Nor can you ask or desire any greater honor, than to be his servant in the gospel, or any greater reward, than to be with him where he is. This is the precious reward, which God has prepared for his faithful servants.

*Brethren and friends of this church and congregation,*

I do most sincerely congratulate you on this occasion, not because you have *chosen* a minister, but because you have chosen one, who, we have reason to think, is a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus,—one whom God has set apart for himself. I hope you may safely look to him as your teacher and example; that he will love you and your children with pure and fervent love, and be willing to spend and be spent for the good of Zion. And now, men and brethren, if through the great goodness of God, you have obtained an able and faithful minister, love and honor him for his work's sake, and give thanks to God for such an inestimable gift. If it is the duty of your minister to exercise meekness and gentleness towards *you*; it is *your* duty to exercise the same towards *him*, and towards one another. Let all your conduct be guided by the meekness of wisdom. This is the ornament of christian society. This yields harmony and peace. This makes harmony and peace durable. This prepares men to profit by the word preached. This prepares believers to maintain order and discipline, and to do much to promote the welfare of Christ's kingdom. The God of peace dwell here, and grant, that the light of truth and holiness in this church may be so pure and bright, that its rays may shine forth to illuminate and bless the surrounding world.

*My respected audience,*

What mean the solemnities of an ordination?—Are they intended to announce to you a release from the obli-

gations of religion, and liberty to spend the day in feasting and mirth? No, my hearers. This day stands in close connexion with the interests of your souls, and the great day of the Lord. These solemnities teach that you are sinners, under sentence of death, and that God is engaged in a work of mercy for your salvation. O what mercy, that has given you the holy scriptures; that has appointed your sabbaths, erected houses of worship, and consecrated your ministers; most of all, that has sent the Lord of glory to die for you.

At the same time, these solemnities forewarn you of solemnities, far more august and momentous,—solemnities, which you must all witness, and in which you must all participate. The day of final account is at hand. Every ordination,—every sabbath,—every sermon,—every prayer,—lessens its distance, and proclaims its approach. That day will show you the end of your worldly pleasures and your carnal hopes. It will show, how you have lived, and what use you have made of your religious privileges. Then, my hearers, you must have a meeting with the ministers of Christ. Your Judge will inquire, what have been your feelings and conduct toward them, and how you have treated the messages of his grace which they have delivered.—For that day of final decision, the Lord in mercy prepare both ministers and people. AMEN.



# CHARGE,

BY THE

*REV. NATHANAEL EMMONS, D. D.*

OF FRANKLIN.

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*Dear Sir,*

You have this day devoted yourself to the service of the sanctuary, and solemnly engaged to take the pastoral care of the church and people of God in this place. You are now a consecrated man ; your time is consecrated time, and your talents are consecrated talents ; which you have no right to employ in any other business, than that of your high and holy calling. Though you may have long and seriously contemplated the duties, the trials, and the high responsibility of the ministerial office ; yet you will find new duties to be performed, new difficulties to be surmounted, and new trials to be endured, which you never did, and never could anticipate ; and which will put your love, your faith, your fortitude and zeal, to the severest test. To deliver the messages of God plainly and faithfully to his people is a work, which has made the hearts of some of the greatest and best men in the world to stoop. You remember the despondency of Elijah at one time, and the despondency of Jeremiah at another. Even Paul himself, under a realizing sense, that the gospel which he preached, would carry life or death

to every hearer, could not refrain from exclaiming with a trembling heart—"Who is sufficient for these things?" The gospel is the same now, that it was then, and is equally interesting both to the preacher, and to the hearer. But as Paul said, so must every faithful minister say,—“Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel.” God now speaks to every one, whom he sends to teach, to warn, and to watch over his people, in the same language in which he addressed the prophet of old, “Son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.”

While your mind, Sir, and ours are tenderly impressed with a deep sense of the magnitude and importance of the work to which, by our instrumentality, you have been designated, we do, in the name of our common Lord, solemnly exhort you, “To take heed to yourself, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseer; to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

And first of all, take heed to yourself. Though you may have received the grace of God in truth, and sincerely resolved to spend and to be spent in the cause of Christ, yet you have not already attained, neither are you

already perfect. Unless you grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, you will certainly fail of discharging your duty to yourself, and to your people. Unless you keep your own vineyard, you will not keep the vineyard of Christ. Unless you are faithful in that which is least, you will not be faithful in that which is much. Unless you take care of your own soul, you will not take care of the souls of others. But if you keep yourself in the love of God, you will be ready to discern, and ready to perform every ministerial duty ; you will find your work pleasant, and your trials light ; you will carry religion into every circle, and appear to be the same man, in and out of your pulpit, and enforce all your public instructions, by your private example. In a word, if you dwell in love, you will dwell in God, and God will dwell in you ; if you walk with God, God will walk with you ; but if you forsake Him, he will forsake you.

In the next place, we exhort you to take heed to all the flock committed to your charge. Feed the sheep, and feed the lambs, with the sincere milk of the word, and give to every one a portion in due season, as a faithful steward of the mysteries of God. “ Renounce the hidden things of dishonesty, walk not in craftiness, nor handle the word of God deceitfully ; but by manifestation of the truth, commend yourself to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” Place the great and essential doctrines of the gospel where they should be placed, that is, at the foundation of all your practical discourses ; and make it appear, that they all grow out of those doctrines, as so

many branches from one common stock. Declare all the counsel of God to your people, without ambiguity and without reserve, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. But they will hear; for they have been long taught the pure doctrines and duties of religion, with great plainness and pungency. This you will consider as a very favourable circumstance, which attends very few preachers, when they enter into other men's labours.

You will administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to visible Christians, and the ordinance of baptism to adult believers and their offspring. You will exercise tenderness, caution, and fidelity, in admitting persons into christian communion, and encourage none to profess religion, unless they appear, in the judgment of charity, to be real friends to Christ. You will follow after the things which make for peace, and endeavour to promote the union and harmony of the church; but if offences should come, and difficulties arise, you will faithfully lead in the exercise of that holy discipline, which Christ has appointed in the eighteenth of Matthew, for the reformation of the guilty, and the exclusion of the impenitent and incorrigible. As the proper discharge of this important and difficult duty will require a large measure of the meekness of wisdom, you will ask it of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given you.

Cherish a warm and affectionate attachment to your people; view them in the light of eternity; carry them every day to the throne of divine grace, and watch for their souls, as one who must give account. Stand continually on your watch-tower, that you may espy every



danger to which they are exposed from themselves, and from those who lie in wait to deceive. "For there are," at this day, as there were in the apostles' day, "many unruly and vain talkers, and deceivers, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." Mark such wolves in sheep's clothing, and not only avoid them yourself, but warn your people to avoid them.

Whenever you are called in providence, to assist in ordaining others to the sacred work of the ministry, let not a desire to please, nor a fear to offend, lead you to betray the cause of Christ; but follow the express command of the apostle on this subject: "Lay hands suddenly on no man; neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure."

It is neither easy, nor necessary to mention in detail, the various duties, which belong to your pastoral office; but be assured, that they are so numerous, and so important, that you can never faithfully discharge them, without much reading, much study, much meditation, and much prayer, and a vigorous exertion of all the powers and faculties, which God has given you. "Be not, then, slothful in business; but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Spend not only your time in general, but the little fragments of time, with great frugality, in furnishing your mind for every branch of ministerial duty. Your Lord and Master was indefatigable in his Father's business; and he gives no allowance to his ministers to stand idle in the vineyard, in which he has placed them. "Therefore be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding

in the work of the Lord ; forasmuch as you know that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord." You have put your hand to the plough, and must never look back, nor be weary in well-doing, though some may become your enemies, because you are faithful and tell them the truth. "For who is he that will harm you, if you be a follower of that which is good?"

Finally, we charge you, before God and the Lord Jesus, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, preach the word ; be instant in season, out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering, and doctrine. Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Meditate upon these things ; give thyself wholly to them ; that they profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto thy doctrine ; continue in them ; for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

# RIGHT-HAND OF FELLOWSHIP,

BY THE

*REV. LUTHER WRIGHT,*

OF MEDWAY.

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LOVE is an essential attribute of Jehovah. Were it not for this glorious perfection of his nature, we should have every thing to fear from his natural perfections. But since "*God is love*," his children have nothing to dread from his infinite knowledge and power. The divine love was manifested in the gift of a Saviour, in his readiness to undertake his benevolent mission, in the ample atonement which he has made for sin, in the effusion of the Holy Spirit, and in the publication of the gospel. The love of God is displayed in the special operations of the Spirit, by which sinners are awakened and converted, and a church established in this guilty world.

The ministers of the gospel are appropriately denominated "workers together with God." Since it devolves upon them, in the execution of their sacred trust, to be the instruments of God in the conversion of sinners, and in instructing and comforting his children, how important is it, that they should possess, and uniformly exercise, the spirit of love. As they acknowledge the same Lord and Master, as they are engaged in the same glorious work, and as they have the same momentous object in view, it

highly concerns them to be of one mind. As a significant expression of equality in office, of brotherly affection, and cordial cooperation, the apostolic practice of giving the right-hand of fellowship to a christian brother, recently inducted into office, has been uniformly observed upon occasions like the present.

Perceiving, dear brother, the grace that is in you, and being satisfied respecting your qualifications for the great work, to which you have been solemnly separated by prayer and the imposition of hands, agreeably to the appointment of this venerable council, and in their name, I cordially present you *this Right Hand*. Accept it as a pledge of our christian affection towards you, as an acknowledgment of you as a regular minister of the Prince of peace, and as being invested with all the authority and privileges of a christian bishop. As long as you continue in character as such, we hereby engage to treat you as a fellow laborer in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. We promise to afford you all that assistance and counsel, which your situation may require, and our respective circumstances permit.

If in return, we may expect from you the same kind offices, you will now give me your hand.

We now, reverend and dear brother, congratulate you on the high and distinguishing honors, which the great Head of the church has this day conferred upon you; having, as we trust, counted you faithful, putting you into the ministry. By a careful observance of the solemn charge you have received, and by a faithful performance of pastoral duty, you will preserve a good conscience, be supported under every trial, obtain the approbation of your Judge, and receive the imperishable rewards of a faithful servant. If our united and fervent prayers should be answered, you will enjoy a long, successful, and happy ministry; you will be the favored instrument of turning



many from the power of sin to the wisdom of the just ; and when death shall separate you from the beloved church and people of your charge, you will possess that consolation and hope, which the world cannot give, nor take away ; you will expire in peace, and know by happy experience, that “ they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament ; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.”

The solemnities of this day obviously import, that we acknowledge this church as a regular member of the mystical body of Christ. Feelingly do we congratulate you, beloved brethren, on this auspicious occasion. A few years since, my respected friends of this church and society, you were called to mourn the departure of your late venerable and faithful minister. On that mournful occasion we were constrained to mingle our tears and our sorrows with yours. But as your prayers and ours, we trust, have been graciously answered ; as your destitute state has been regarded in mercy ; as you now behold the man of your choice, solemnly consecrated to your service, you have abundant reason to rejoice, and to feel your obligations to the great Repairer of breaches.

My situation has often called me among you, to visit chambers of sickness, and houses of mourning. In seasons of affliction I have sympathized with you ; and now a brighter prospect is before you, I sincerely rejoice with you. That the great end of the gospel ministry may be accomplished among you, permit me to entreat you to view your pastor as an ascension gift. Encourage him by your prayers and constant attendance on his ministrations ; treat him with candor and affection, and esteem him very highly in love for his work's sake. We have reason to hope, that the great Shepherd of the flock has sent him for a blessing to you, and to your children. Long may you live together in peace ; and may the God of

love and peace be with you, and bless you. May your pastor rejoice in witnessing the success of his labors, and and the continued expressions of your kindness and esteem. May he so discharge the arduous duties of an ambassador of Christ, and you, my friends, so attend to the warnings, admonitions, and invitations of the gospel, that you may be each other's crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord ; and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, may you appear with him in glory.

AMEN.







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